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The day of the confederacy. A chronicle of the embattled south. By Nathaniel W. Stephenson. [The chronicles of America. Edited by Allen Johnson under the supervision of the committee on publications of the Yale university council] (New Haven: Yale university press, 1919. 214 p. \$3.50)

The time has come for the telling of the story of the southern confederacy under separate cover — albeit in its proper relations to the larger development of American history. This Mr. Stephenson has essayed to do within the limits of this series; in his task he has both enjoyed the advantages and labored under the difficulties of a pioneer rôle. For the product of his pen workers in the field of southern history owe him a debt of gratitude. He has shown skill and courage in defining his obligations to his subject-matter; when one doubts the proportions assigned to a phase of one's subject, it is seldom difficult to find an explanation, if not a justification. It seems, however, almost as though he failed to find his pace in the first chapter, "The secession movement." One may doubt the wisdom of ending the first stage of the movement with the federal occupation of Fort Sumter, instead of making the usual division after the secession of South Carolina; his own narrative makes the occupation of Sumter a significant influence in the withdrawal of the states of the lower south — the second phase. So, too, he makes the second phase continue *through* the firing on Sumter and Lincoln's call for troops.

One is puzzled by the few passing references to the southern theory of secession. "Virtually no one denied the right" (p. 7), is the impression one receives; yet one does not know whether or no this means the "constitutional right of secession" as claimed by southern theorists. More and more the student of the sectional controversy is impressed with the fact that to those who opposed as well as to those who planned the secession movement this right of secession was fundamentally the right of revolution, a right which, in the abstract, is denied by no group of Americans. When Mr. Stephenson tells us of the group that wanted to preserve, along with the union, "the principle of local autonomy," one is still more puzzled. This principle, we are assured, "did not perish at Appomatox but was transformed and not destroyed" (p. 12). He laments the impossibility of coördinating the two principles without the price of war; one cannot see that this was accomplished by the war or even in spite of the war — not after the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments. The average reader will confuse the principle of "local autonomy" in this case with that of the rights of "small nationalities," which, after his chapter in *Lincoln and the union*, on "The two nations of the republic," Mr. Stephenson might well have presented as the guiding force of those leaders who sought to work out southern rights in a separate political entity. But alas! ten pages of dramatically pre-

sented narrative on the capture of Fort Sumter block the way to such explanations.

It was the irony of fate that Jefferson Davis, a soldier by choice, was called to the helm of the southern republic. Soon he encountered the antagonism of such leaders as Rhett and Yancey, who had prepared the way for the great revolution. This is well set forth, with the plausible suggestion that Davis represented the larger loyalty of the newer states to southern nationality, whereas Rhett was motivated by a traditional devotion to state allegiance. Yet Rhett and his associates had risen above mere state loyalty in their propaganda at the southern commercial conventions of the fifties. Later chapters bring out the extent of the opposition to the Davis government; in spite of the abundant materials, however, no adequate notice is taken of the relations between Davis and Toombs. Mr. Stephenson is frank to say that the administration "blundered in being too secretive" (p. 60) — that it kept the country in the dark in regard to some vital matters that required understanding. "That the secretive habit of the Confederate Government helped cement the opposition cannot be doubted" (p. 65). Then, too, "Davis lacked that insight into human life which marks the genius of the supreme executive" (p. 67). The financial problems of the confederacy are handled in conjunction with the problem of securing foreign help; negotiations with France are emphasized because of the perennial hope the Davis administration entertained of aid from that source. Chapters on the problems of both the government and the people in war time cannot fail to impress even the casual reader with the complexity of the story of the southern struggle for independence. The book carries the different threads forward until the final collapse — while Davis was yet prophesying victory and hoping against hope. The difficult problem of narration is handled with some degree of skill. The reviewer offers the friendly suggestion that the monotony of repeating the unusual form "basal" in the expressions "basal ideas," "basal principles," et cetera, might easily have been avoided.

ARTHUR C. COLE

Federal military pensions in the United States. By William H. Glasson. (New York: Oxford university press, 1918. 298 p. \$2.50)

In 1900 Professor Glasson published in the *Columbia Studies* a monograph on pension legislation in the United States. In the present work, promoted and published by the Carnegie endowment for international peace, he has embodied the results of his more mature studies. The preface is dated November, 1917, and opportunity was taken to include in the appendix a useful analysis of the war insurance act of that year. The important story of civil war pensions covers considerably more than